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EdReach Newsletter - Week of November 16, 2007

Rex, corporate partners unveil TV ads designed to recruit new teachers

A new public-private partnership initiative targeted at attracting talented people to the teaching profession in South Carolina is working to improve the image of the teaching profession. To read more, visit: <http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=865>

High school students' performance marks big improvement on exit exam

South Carolina students improved their performance on the state's high school assessment, and those improvements included some dramatic increases in the percentages of students scoring at higher levels. To read more, visit:
<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=863>

Education Department releases Report Card ratings

State Report Card ratings for 2007 show an increase in the number of schools and school districts rated Below Average or Unsatisfactory. To read more, visit:
<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=867>

Message from Jim Rex

Dear Friends:

Educators in South Carolina and across the country have been taking part this week in the 86th annual celebration of American Education Week. It's a great opportunity for all of us to celebrate the successes our students and teachers are having and to think about what must be done to help all public schools achieve the kinds of results we want, need and deserve for every child. That's critical for our state and nation to succeed in the 21st century.

American Education Week's theme this year has special significance: "Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility." I think that could serve as the rallying cry for 800 South Carolinians who took part in a recent study of public education. After talking with school superintendents, principals, teachers, school board members, parents

and business leaders over the past two years, researchers from the Riley Institute at Furman University came to these conclusions:

First, all of the participants agreed that students in South Carolina need and deserve public schools that will prepare them for the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly global society.

Second, everyone wanted to play a part in improving South Carolina's public schools, no matter if they came from wealthy, poor, rural, suburban or big city school districts.

The study's results reinforce what I've been hearing in my town hall meetings, community visits and school tours across the state. There is intense, broad-based support for our public schools, plus widespread interest in improving and reforming them. Our citizens are focused on the issues that they believe really matter, such as:

- Recruiting and retaining effective teachers in every classroom, and giving teachers the support they need to be successful.

- Making available high-quality early childhood education programs in all public schools.

- Increasing after-school, summer, and tutoring programs for struggling students and developing public schools as community learning centers to serve students and families.

The Riley study also found citizen support for smaller class sizes, family literacy programs, stronger parental involvement, higher teacher salaries, better school facilities, dropout prevention programs starting in the eighth grade and a curriculum that helps prepare students to thrive both at home and in a global economy.

In short, the study sums up grassroots sentiment this way: "...folks are passionate about public education in South Carolina and they want to make our schools as strong and efficient as possible." That sentiment is at the heart of the package of new school reform laws, regulations and modified policies that we'll propose to the General Assembly in January 2008.

Leaders seeking the courage to support our reform agenda need to look no further than this fact: The Riley report says that South Carolinians agree on our basic rights to, and responsibilities for, making "great public schools" available to all the children of all the people here. That's true not only during American Education Week, but also the whole year through.

Sincerely,

Jim Rex
State Superintendent of Education

Rex on The Road:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/superintendent/Rex-on-The-Road-Schedule.html>

In The News:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/>

On The Air:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/On-The-Air.html>

Dates to Remember:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Dates-to-Remember.html>

Resources for Teachers:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-Teachers.html>

Resources for Students:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-Students.html>

Resources for Administrators:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Resources-for-School-Administrators.html>

What Others Are Saying:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/agency/offices/publicinformation/Education-RelatedEditorialOpinion.html>

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